

HONORING LIEUTENANT COLONEL GEORGE G. DONA, MAJOR MARY O. JENNINGS HEGAR, SENIOR MASTER SERGEANT STEVE R. BURT, AND TECHNICAL SERGEANT TIEJIE A. JONES UPON RECEIPT OF THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS WITH VALOR

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 16, 2011

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge and honor Lieutenant Colonel George G. Dona, Major Mary O. Jennings Hegar, Senior Master Sergeant Steve R. Burt, and Technical Sergeant Tiejie A. Jones upon their award of the Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor.

The Distinguished Flying Cross is America's oldest military aviation award. In 1926, the 69th Congress established the Distinguished Flying Cross to honor any person serving in the Armed Forces who distinguishes him or herself "by heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in an aerial flight."

On July 29, 2009, Lieutenant Colonel George G. Dona, Major Mary O. Jennings Hegar, Senior Master Sergeant Steve R. Burt, and Technical Sergeant Tiejie A. Jones evacuated three United States soldiers injured when their convoy was attacked near Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan. Colonel Dona and Major Hegar were injured when a bullet pierced their aircraft's window, injuring Major Hegar's arm and Colonel Dona's leg. Despite the heavy fire, the pararescue team departed the aircraft to assist with the medical evacuation. However, the aircraft was forced out of the landing zone. After several minutes airborne, Major Hegar and Colonel Dona voluntarily risked their lives to return and rescue their patients and pararescuemen from the ambush.

While still under attack, Sergeant Jones assisted with loading the casualties and Sergeant Burt aided the pilots during takeoff to keep the aircraft functional. Due to fuel loss from the number one engine, the crew had to land less than two miles away. Sergeant Burt administered first aid and assisted in the transfer of patients to another aircraft. Their bravery saved three patients and ensured the survival of the crew.

It was my honor and privilege to recognize Lieutenant Colonel George G. Dona, Major Mary O. Jennings Hegar, Senior Master Sergeant Steve R. Burt, and Technical Sergeant Tiejie A. Jones at a ceremony while I was home in my district. The outstanding heroism displayed deserves great recognition by the entire United States, the nation they have so selflessly served. Lieutenant Colonel George G. Dona, Major Mary O. Jennings Hegar, Senior Master Sergeant Steve R. Burt, and Technical Sergeant Tiejie A. Jones have the respect and gratitude of all Americans.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 16, 2011

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained from November 1

until November 15, as I was attending to family matters surrounding the birth of my son.

A TRIBUTE TO JOLENE KOESTER, PRESIDENT OF CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 16, 2011

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary leadership and service of Dr. Jolene Koester. Dr. Koester began her appointment as the fourth president of California State University, Northridge on July 1, 2000, one of the largest campuses in the 23-campus California State University system. In May 2011, she announced her plans to step down as president at the end of December 2011 and subsequently retire from The California State University.

California State University, Northridge is a vibrant, diverse university community of more than 36,000 students served by 4,000 faculty and staff. The University plays an indispensable role in the San Fernando Valley as an intellectual, cultural and economic driver.

Under her leadership, the University has improved graduation rates, received record levels of fundraising, and become known for its culture of collaboration. Dr. Koester's vision and determination led to the development of the Valley Performing Arts Center at California State University, Northridge—the first world-class concert hall for nearly 2 million residents of the San Fernando Valley. During her tenure, she has increased the overall stature of Cal State Northridge, resulting in improved visibility and relationships in the San Fernando Valley and Los Angeles.

Known nationally for her leadership in the area of higher education, Dr. Koester is a member and past chair of the Board of Directors for the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. Dr. Koester serves the greater Los Angeles community on the boards of directors for the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, the Valley Economic Alliance, and the Valley Industry and Commerce Association. She also is a board member of the Los Angeles World Affairs Council and the Los Angeles Jobs and Economy Committee. She has received numerous awards and recognitions for her leadership in the Los Angeles region.

Prior to her appointment at Cal State Northridge, Dr. Koester served as provost and vice president for Academic Affairs at California State University, Sacramento. Before her service as provost, she held other executive positions in the academic affairs division at Sacramento State, and was a faculty member there, as a professor of communication studies, since 1980. She earned a Bachelor's of Arts from the University of Minnesota in 1970, a Master's of Arts in communication arts from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1971, and a Ph.D. in speech communication from Minnesota in 1980.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Koester for her commitment to furthering the excellence of California State University, Northridge. She is an extraordinary leader whose legacy will succeed her for decades to come.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 16, 2011

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today for the first time our national debt has surpassed \$15 trillion dollars. Currently, our national debt is \$15,033,607,255,920.32.

On January 6, 2009, the start of the 111th Congress, the national debt was \$10,638,425,746,293.80.

This means the national debt has increased by \$4,395,181,509,626.52 since then. This debt and its interest payments we are passing to our children and all future Americans.

HONORING SENIOR MASTER SERGEANT LARRY I. HIYAKUMOTO AND STAFF SERGEANT JOSHUA M. WEBSTER UPON RECEIPT OF THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS WITH VALOR

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 16, 2011

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge and honor Senior Master Sergeant Larry I. Hiyakumoto and Staff Sergeant Joshua M. Webster upon their award of the Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor.

The Distinguished Flying Cross is America's oldest military aviation award. In 1926, the 69th Congress established the Distinguished Flying Cross to honor any person serving in the Armed Forces who distinguishes him or herself "by heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in an aerial flight."

On June 27, 2010, Senior Master Sergeant Larry I. Hiyakumoto and Staff Sergeant Joshua M. Webster participated in eight non-stop Casualty Evacuation missions near Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. They rescued and treated wounded personnel for nearly seven straight hours.

On one mission, Sergeant Webster was hoisted down from the helicopter while Sergeant Hiyakumoto manned the aircraft's machine gun. While braving enemy fire, Sergeant Webster pulled a wounded soldier to safety. Sergeant Hiyakumoto then began to treat the soldier for multiple broken bones and traumatic head injuries. Sergeant Hiyakumoto and Sergeant Webster ultimately saved thirteen United States soldiers and coalition forces.

It was my honor and privilege to recognize Senior Master Sergeant Larry I. Hiyakumoto and Staff Sergeant Joshua M. Webster at a ceremony while I was home in my district. The outstanding heroism displayed deserves great recognition by the entire United States, the nation they have so selflessly served. Senior Master Sergeant Larry I. Hiyakumoto and Staff Sergeant Joshua M. Webster have the respect and gratitude of all Americans.